

Stargazing 101

What's the best place for stargazing? The darker the place the better! Light is the biggest obstacle to a clear view of the heavens. So the best stargazing is found in rural areas, far from city lights. Altitude also helps. That's why most observatories are placed on mountaintops.

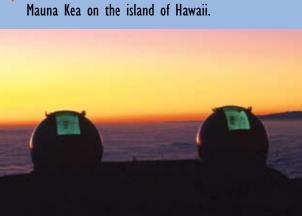
Stargazing on the Islands

Most people know that Hawaii is a great place to sightsee. It is also one of the best places to watch the stars!

Many of the world's best observatories on land are in Hawaii. You can probably find an observatory near you, too. You can also visit one online.

What makes Hawaii good for stargazing? The dry and still air gives a clear view. The high altitudes and thousands of miles of ocean help as well. With few city lights around, the skies are nice and dark.

The Keck Twin Telescopes were built on Mauna Kea in Hawaii. From the top of this volcano, scientists watch the skies. They can see into the deepest parts of the universe. Each "twin" is eight stories high. It weighs about 300 tons. Mauna Kea is an inactive volcano. It does not erupt. So, it makes a good, high spot for an observatory.



The Keck Twin Telescopes are located on